of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the quantity of rice and wheat imported during the years 1986-87 and 1987-88; and

(b) what is the total cost of imported rice and wheat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No wheat or rice was imported on Government account during the years 1986-87 and 1987-88.

(b) Does not arise.

Treatment plant to disinfect mangoes

*55. SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up a treatment plant to disinfect mangoes to encourage their exports to Japan and other countries; and

(b) if so, by when and where the plant is likely to be set up?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Efforts are being made to establish facilities for vapour heat treatment plants for disinfestation of mangoes.

Prices of sugar

*56. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the' Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of sugar have risen very high in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether there is a shortage of sugar in the country; and

(d) if not, the steps taken to bring down the prices of sugar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) to (d) The open market price of sugar has been generally steady for the last two years. In the last few weeks, there has been some increase in the open market price of sugar. This has been mainly due to speculative tendencies in the sugar market.

Government has already taken measures to contain price increase. The free sale sugar quota for the month of July, 1988 has been increased from 4.40 lakh tonnes released for the month of June, 1988 to 5.00 lakh tonnes. For the month of August, 1988, free sale quota of 5 lakh tonnes Out of indigenous sugar has been released. In addition to this, imported sugar would also be released to State Governments for distribution through the controlled channels. The State Governments have also been advised to ensure strict enforcement of statu-torv provisions relating to stock hold-. ing- limits and time limit for turnover of stocks. Government would also ensure strict enforcement of statutory provisions relating to sale and despatch of released quantity by the sugar factories.

Employment opportunities for rural and urban labour

*57. SHRI SHARAD YADAV SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be plased to state:

(a) what is the percentage of increase in the employmnet of labour in the country both in rural and urban areas at the end of 1987 as compared with the employment opportunities created at the end of 1986; and

(b) whether any evaluation of the programmes for alleviating poverty and creating employment for the la-hour in the country has been made by Government; if so, what is the outcome thereof stating the percentage by which employment opportunities

are likely to be created for the labour during the coming years?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY): (a) According to the Seventh Plan Document, employment in terms of Standard Person Years is projected to grow at an annual rate of 3.99 per cent over the period 1985-90. Information on increase in employment on yearly basis is not available.

(b) The major programmes for alleviating poverty and creating employment have been reviewed as a part of the Mid Term Appraisal of the Seventh Five Year Plan. The Mid Term Appraisal states that while the targets of Employment generation under the major employment generating programmes have been achieved during the first two years of the Plan, there is an urgent need for a closer and purposive integration between the special anti-poverty programmes and the development strategy both for a better effectiveness of the programmes and ensuring lasting solutions to the problems of poverty and unemployment. Information is not available on the percen. tage by which employment opportunities are likely to be created during the coming years.

Setting up of Newsprint Supply and Credit Corporation

*58. SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR: SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Federation of Small and Medium Newspapers (IFSMN) has called for the setting up of a Newsprint Supply and Credit Corporation to meet the Vagaries of the shortage of newsprint and lifting of the quota in bulk by the small and medium newspapers; and

(b) whether the President of IFSMN has held the increase in newsprint price as "anti-growth' as the newspaper industry is already facing a challenge to upgrade the technology for better production and impact, if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) and (b) The Government has seen the newspaper reports on this subject. It does not share the view that the increase in the price of newsprint is "anti-growth". While the price of indigenous newsprint is fixed by the Ministry of Industry after taking into account various factors, the price of imported newsprint is fixed by a duly constituted price Fixation Committee on which the newspaper industry is adequately represented. The existing arrangements are adequate to ensure a sustained supply of newsprint to the newspapers. It is not considered necessary to set up any newsprint supply and credit corporation for this purpose.

Participation of women in Agricultural and Rural Development Projects

*59. SHRI CHANDRIKA PRASAD TRIPATHI:

DR. RATNAKAR PANDEY:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose for greater participation of women in agricultural and rural development projects especially in national projects like drinking water supply etc.; and

(b) if so, the steps taken so far by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI JANAR-DHAN POOJARY): (a) and (b) The steps taken by the Government of India for greater participation of Women in various agricultural and rural